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TANGLEWOOD ISLAND A REAL FAIRY LAND

Mrs. Conrad L. Hoska's Wish for Beautiful Sound Island Granted Like That of Made to Fairy God-Mother and Tanglewood Is Made to Bloom in Fruit and Flowers

By Bernice E. Newell

"If I had a million dollars, I would buy that little island, and have it for my own small kingdom," declared Mrs. Conrad Hoska, one lovely summer day years ago, when a party of Tacoma friends had spent the day cruising around the waters of Puget Sound, and had made the circuit of Fox Island, stopping for luncheon at Sylvan, and looking across to a small dot in the water, just east of the sheltered cove.

The remark was forgotten as soon as spoken, but a few days later Mr. Hoska entered his home on North D street, and smilingly remarked: "Well, my dear, I don't think you will have to wait for a million to get that island."

"What island?" asked Mrs. Hoska, and her amazement was great when she learned that the wish was granted like wishes that the fairy godmother overhears, and the mysterious and inviting little principality was hers to rule over in undisputed sovereignty.

MANY CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE

That was in 1896, and many changes have taken place since the, in the appearance of the island, in the surrounding community, and in the family which made the charming spot their playground for years. It was with the feeling of being a Robinson Crusoe family that they ventured first into the thicket that came close down to the water's edge, and peeped cautiously into the dense wood that covered the place.

Covered With Timber.

Not a foot of land but was covered with a heavy growth, absolutely impenetrable at first, and the pretty shore line and shelving beach was covered at high tide, making it appear like a big green bouquet set in the sparkling water. Including the shore, the island contains 18 acres, 13 of which is above the tide level, and when the Tacoma Crusoes set to work, the wild spot began to show its contour under the strokes of the clearing axes and the uprooting blasts which tore the big roots from the earth. Mr. Hoska cleared 13 acres, leaving three for a wild park at the back of the house, which was built as soon as possible, and the place became thoroughly incorporated into the history of Tacoma, so hospitable and cordial were the dwellers on the little kingdom.

There was a boy and a girl in the Hoska family, and what the island meant to them can never be said nor sung, all those years when they were growing up and spending lovely long summers in that safe and fascinating spot. The boy built lookout places in the trees and explored the hidden places for Indian relics and traces of animals; he made bonfires and dug caves and fished from the long wharf which was built to accommodate the launch in which the happy people made their frequent trips. He learned the lore of the woods and the waves, and the wild things that make their home in the secret places, and he became expert in many things which the boy in the city never dreams about. The girl played with him, and so did the mother and father, and the Hoska Island was known of many and loved by all. Every summer there would be trips to the island on the commodious launch, Venture, when a party of friends were entertained for days by the genial hosts.

Soon, there was a young orchard started, and in the spring the faint pink of

the young trees would show delicately against the green background of Fox Island, getting deeper and stronger each season, and then there were apples and cherries, and pears, and whatever else is good and juicy and fit to live and minister to the happiness of happy folk. Mr. Hoska, in jest, told his friends that every one who paid a quarter might own one tree on the island, and the roll of those who thus took shares in the new enterprise, is long and bears many names of prominence.

What to name it? That was the question over which the family spent much thought. Ellen's Isle, it had been called by the Fox Island dwellers, but the queen of the new domain was not entirely content. Finally, one day, when "Tanglewood Tales" had been holdinggsway over the boy and girl, someone exclaimed, as they struggled through the undergrowth, "Why it's a regular Tanglewood," and the problem was instantly solved. Gradually the long, slender line of the island became visible, and it lay, cigar-shaped, with its ends pointing directly north and south, its natural beauty unimpaired, its wonderfully pictureque trees standing out so that the great variety of flora could be observed. Three-fourths of the island is under cultivation, and every fruit that grows in this region is planted and flourishes, yielding abundantly of the best, cherries, all sorts of berries, every variety of apple and pear, quinces, plums, peaches, apricots and many rare small fruits. There was no water on the island, so the modern Robinson Crusoe acquired a small tributary territory on the opposite bank of Fox Island, where springs eternal flow, and where the water is pure and delicious, and Tanglewood, the pipes lying on the bottom of the Sound, under 50 feet of salt water, keeping the water supply cold as ice and furnishing a bountiful supply for the irrigation of the whole island. The land on which the springs are located is heavily wooded, and is kept intact as a permanent source of supply, and the large, comfortable house at Tanglewood has all the conveniences of the city, with water and bath, and a splendid big fireplace, an immense verandah, where the meals were always spread in the summer time and an outlook down the Sound, which is an inspiration.

Many distinguished guests have known the charm of Tanglewood. Mr. Hoska was a prominent Mason, of the highest degree, and on one occasion the entire Ivanhoe commandery of Knight Templars was entertained by him, and he received the beautiful jewel as Past Eminent Commander, a memento tenderly treasured now by his son.

Picturesque Nooks Abound.

The odd growth and picturesque nooks are many. There is an old cedar tree which has reclined in a horizontal position so long that from its trunk have grown seven fine, large trees, a weird contortion of some dryad's fancy, and there are innumerable peculiar madrones with their beautiful red bark and brilliant berries. The "Umbrella" tree hangs over the waters' edge, at the point where the boat bound for Tanglewood was wont to enter port, and there are countless tempting trunks to scale, for lookout up and down the channel. The majesty of Mount Tacoma is before the island, and the glory of the Olympics lies behind, and the sapphire sea is all around. The battleships of the world may circle the place, so dead is the water that lies about it, and the storms that blow from any quarter dare not disturb its tranquility.

On such a spot one of the best-known families of Tacoma lavished their personal love and care. It is full of their individuality, and whenever a friend of Mrs. Hoska receives an invitation to Tanglewood, she may count herself fortunate indeed.

Nearly all the young people of Tacoma have spent halcyon days during the summer vacation at Tanglewood, the guests of the happy boy and girl, who have grown past the days of play, but not past the days of happiness in the old familiar scenes. It was to Tanglewood that the boy took his young bride not two years ago, to spend a charmed honeymoon, and it is to Tanglewood that the girl hastens when she comes occasionally from her station as the wife of a soldier in the eastern states.

Last summer Mrs. Hoska chartered one of the large launches and carried a party of friends for a blissful day in cherry time. It was a perfect day in early July, and those who were privileged to be among the number will never forget it. No pains have been spared to care for the orchard, and it returns, in manyfold, the labor and effort spent upon it. The great luscious cherries hung heavy in the branches, and after luncheon served on the wide veranda, the guests were sent out with small tin buckets to pick cherries to carry home.

A new book of "Tanglewood Tales" might be written about this charming island, of the experiences that befell the subjugators of the primeval forest and the lakes that they enjoy while they passed the happy years in the most wholesome work and play.

Pictures accompanying newspaper article

- 1 -- Mrs. Conrad L. Hoska
- 2 -- Cottage at Tanglewood.
- 3 -- View of Tanglewood island estate of Mrs. Hoska.
- 4 -- Playing they are Seagulls.
- 5 -- Climbing Lukas' Lookout.